

T/502/3/56/91

EDITORIAL.....

Contributions for this issue have only been forthcoming from Stirling and Edinburgh. However, we are implementing conference decision to publish a regular newsletter-even if the result's rather bitty.

Things are quiet in Dundee-the group is down to a hard core of 3, and is continuing to work on a statement of common beliefs. Members are active in the Dundee Food Co-op (flourishing!), the A.S. Neill Trust Association (which is coming along nicely), Womens' Liberation, Womens' Aid, Rank & File teachers, etc.

Contributions for the next newsletter should be sent to the Stirling group (Address within) by the 20th. July
Dundee Group.

STIRLING GROUP REPORT

The group at present numbers eight (in regular contact with each other) with perhaps another 3 or 4 possible activists. The size of the group might be surprising, but considering that we've only been 'formed' for a few weeks-in other words there has been no time for real dissension between comrades, or rupture through non-activity-the figure is unremarkable.

Most members of the group are students (apart from a librarian and the Shelter contact) so our activity has been centred round the campus. There has been a bookstall, distribution of a Situationist-inspired leaflet, which have both taken place to advertise a meeting in the Union. The strategy has not been overtly Anarchist, but has taken the form of an 'alternative left', to concentrate on not dealt with by the traditional Trotskyist and Broad Left campus groups. It is hoped to set up a Society to provide funds for next term's activities.

Issues we'll concentrate on: a continuation of the BWNIC and an extension of it into an all-embracing anti-militarist campaign; squatting; an alternative transport system, perhaps on Provo lines; propaganda work, (particularly, on campus, to counteract the influence of IS and the Bored Left) with emphasis on Alternative Technology and opposition to nuclear power stations.

As a reminder: N.S. is at present attempting to add up to date Anarchist material to the already substantial archive which exists in the University library. Would comrades with spare copies of any national-but particularly local-Anarchist papers, journals, leaflets (including material on Libertarian education-typist) please send them to the Stirling contact address. A catalogue of this collection has just been published, and is available from John Noyce, PO Box no 450, Brighton, Sussex-price 30p.

S.L.F. Contact Addresses.....
Glasgow: Chas Baird
122 Canneray St.,
Milton,
Glasgow G22 7AU
Edinburgh: Bob Gibson, 7 Union St.,
Edinburgh EH1 6LT
Dundee: Mike Malet,
1, Lynnewood Place,
Dundee.
Aberdeen: S. Blake,
c/o AFP, 167 King St.,
Aberdeen AB2 3AE
Stirling: N. Sherrington,
25 Churchill Drive,
Bridge of Allan,
Stirlingshire.
*Contact international secretary
through Glasgow address*

AND NOW, AT GREAT EXPENSE, WE PRESENT.....

MINUTES OF THE SLF CONFERENCE, EDINBURGH, 8-9 MAY, 1976

DAY ONE: Saturday began late, with several comrades inexcusably late in arriving. The agenda was agreed, with group reports first.

Glasgow began by describing their 'take over the city strategy', which was inspired by events in Italy. This topic was thought worthy of further discussion later. Next came a report of events on the last grants demo. in Glasgow. Glasgow comrades played a prominent role in preventing the police from splitting the march.

Conference saw copies of 'Clydesider', a new implicitly libertarian community paper for the Glasgow area produced by some Glasgow comrades. They hoped to produce in the near future an explicitly libertarian paper, "Anarchist Alternatives."

Possibilities of Matt Lygate Defence Group were discussed briefly. A.M.C.G. to report on this in this bulletin.

Glasgow strength increasing, and members optimistic about future developments.

Dundee group detailed the problems they have found inside their own ranks. These mainly of a personal and political nature. One or two members have left, but group now recovering and probability of regaining strength. Two magazines produced: "Black Cat" and "News from Nowhere". Both now defunct. Group drafting a manifesto/platform. MM now on EIS local executive, and delegate to Trades Council.

No-one present from St. Andrews, but NR reported. St.A. fragmented, but some little activity still going on. Dundee student group virtually dormant.

Questions from Glasgow on extent, if any, of Dundee direct action. MM & NR explained difficulties when group very small. Also questions about involvement in larger-scale activities.

Edinburgh group reported on Spanish meeting - successful, but little follow-up. Bookstall now regular and highly successful. Manifesto/platform being drawn up as follow-up for interested individuals. Group sent members to anti-fascist and anti-cuts demos in London, where one arrested. No result as yet, minor charge however. SH carrying on activities until recently, when taken ill, now in hospital. Conference extended best wishes and gratitude to S. for good work to date. Group at 4 regulars, of which 3 AWA. Has acquired duplicator (NB - Roneo). Members hopeful about future - since conference, increased possibilities of expansion and definite broadening of activities.

Minority report from Edinburgh observer. Relevance of report debated, but, on his suggestion, agreed that we have open sessions.

Aberdeen group (SR) detailed heavy involvement in oil pamphlet and APP, also SR publications. Attended May Day rally and March. Libertarian involvement in WEA. Probable future expansion.

Stirling - NS - reported some interest in Stirling. JP has disappeared, suspected in London. Bookstall main activity so far. Meeting place booked, but cancelled by helpful district council: follow up meeting collapsed. Some contact with community worker near Stirling.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON :

see page 4, following minutes of Sunday morning.

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NR: Comments on the Conference.

The conference left me with feelings of annoyance & frustration: organization was bad, sessions started hours late, & when they did, very little happened. However, what really got to me was less obvious - an atmosphere of arrogance, a belief by some people that, with a little effort, they could save the world, no bother, &c, &c. It manifested itself in many ways: they way some people kept the rest of us waiting for hours without bothering to apologize, the incredibly overambitious schemes some had, the tendency - which I felt keenly - to place the blame for things not working out on others with less bloated ambitions. Now, in Dundee, a similar feeling developed round Black Cat in particular, & we spent a long time making great plans. However, the world kept turning like it always does, & we realized that we would need to push longer & harder, & that what pushing we'd done was largely misdirected. Disillusion set in, the group declined seriously, & some comrades gave up political activity completely.

So how do we prevent this happening to the SLF? I think we've got to realize that the libertarian movement has hit a slump, & there are likely to be more lean years ahead. Thus talk of 'taking over the city' &c is rather empty - though the fair fares campaign & other such plans are good practice for activists. The SLF should try to widen out - at present it's a federation of mainly closed little groups: efforts should be made to bring in more people. Having public sessions at conferences is a step in the right direction. We should also indulge in more in-depth study, in order to get our thinking in order: it wouldn't be a bad idea to give over most of future conferences to study sessions. (And to the comrade who wanted to veto my suggestion of a session on psychology & psychiatry, how can you know a subject is irrelevant when you don't know anything about it?)

Finally: more consideration for others should be shown by comrades: less needling and less turning up late. What matters, really, is consciousness, & if conferences continue like this one, we'll never proceed beyond a low consciousness level, & push libertarian ideas back into the mainstream.

SUNDAY MORNING.

1) Scottish Labour Party.

MM began by suggesting importance of SLP. As a new political phenomenon, it needed to be discussed. Improvement on Labour & SNP. Members of other groups, eg IMG, joining SLP, but also non-aligned of two main sorts: a) previous non-political, mainly young, finding SLP an ideological home; b) Labour members of long standing, but with some principles left.

More chance of winning over (a). If SLP goes way of LP, then young people will come out of it because of dissatisfaction. Possible move to Trots or to us? PG queried if SLP leaders principled. MM said no. Leaders separate from (a) and (b). PB said scale of SLP exaggerated in press. Possibly not unconnected with the fact that some reporters are in it.

BG asked if support for SLP was a compromise between socialism & nationalism. Is much of the "nationalist" ideology not really a manifestation of the decentralist urge? PB & MM: do we practise entrim? MM: Is SLP different from LP? Enttrim into LP? IMG in both already. We could only be a 'rival shop' to them. MM against entrim on balance, does not rule it out in all circumstances. Several comrades suggested SLP still at stage where personal local contacts the best technique. KM & BG said entrim totally against anarchist principles - recourse to entrim suggests failure of anarchist politics. KM: we must be active to get members! Especially out of SLP. MM & BG stressed need to hit hard at SLP - must of course be active to do this. PB: 'Uncorrupted' young members will either leave or become rapidly 'corrupted'.

BG: What about joint activities - personally prepared to work in any joint activity that does not compromise his politics. SB: Much joint activity with other groups over BWNIC defence. Possible to work in joint activity with SLP? MM: More congenial to work with than Trots. BG: And less dangerous. KM: Critique of left circus relevant here. KM & MM: Involvement at most a tactic. Comrades in agreement.

2) 'Right to Work' vs. 'Right to Live'.

NR: 'RW' a Trot front. Possible 'Unemployed Persons Federation' in Dundee. MM: Claimants' Unions?

PG - Paper on RW. RW increasing. Anarchist attacks too simplistic. In a sense RW is a revolutionary demand. Defects: It does not break with the capitalist structure, does not ask "why work"? Purely a wage-front campaign. Does not ask what kind of work. Claimants' Unions Fight to Live campaign: CUs must federate at all levels much more effectively. Anarchist 'right' to be exploited response too simplistic.

NS & PG: FL a campaign on its own and also part of a wider strategy. FL unites struggles whereas PW splits worker from claimant and unemployed. IS in particular do not accept equal importance of claimants and unemployed. Trad. obsession with shop-floor to exclusion of all else. CUs not effective at national level. Suggestion of local 'Burroo Bulletins', might be co-ordinated nationally. Policy agreed that all such local efforts should be included in SLF Newsletter.

3) Scottish Libertarian Federation.

KM - Paper on SLF, CBA &c. Too little information as yet on erratic behaviour of CBA. KM & others dubious about CBA potential - frighteningly like old AFB. Referred to next conference for further discussion. Any information comrades get - into newsletter, please.

Election of SLF International Secretary: JS of GAG to liaise with A & V McG who are already producing Mit-teilung. National Secretary considered unnecessary. List of comrades able to translate foreign material compiled.

SLF Conference Minutes - continued -

Sunday Morning - continued - continuation of 3) SLF.

Debate on who is allowed in & who isn't - long & confused. CB stressed danger of boxing ourselves off & need for as much new blood as we can get. B G agrees, but stresses that SLF should have some sort of structure for closed business meetings and closed 'planning' meetings if these are thought necessary. Basically up to local groups to decide on those to attend. Consensus eventually reached.

Future SLF conferences: Saturday & Sunday mornings - business - for SLF members. Saturday & Sunday afternoons - open public meetings - to be advertised as widely as possible.

Next conference: Aberdeen, early November 76. Newsletter every two months. Dundee next, then Stirling, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen. All copy for newsletter to be with producing group by 20th of month when due out.

Finance for International Secretary: each group pays £1 per conference, GAG £2. JS to find out all about CBA & circulate, in newsletter, before next conference.

Saturday Afternoon.

(minutes not so full)

1) Child Care.

K initiated discussion. Sex roles and upbringing. Discussion widens into abortion, contraception, and one should not be too hard on genuine Catholics.

2) Return to 'Take Over the City'.

KM asked for exposition - basically, the unification of struggles, bringing them into everyday life, making people see their own power to change their own lives. Fares campaign not as yet a great success, many tactical problems. Good relations with bus crews, not so good with inspectors & plain clothes bus cops. Lack of adequate publicity, press less than trustworthy. Efforts spread too thinly. Possibilities of directing the actions of gangs? Good idea, but easy to lose control. Discussion about free schools & NUSS, NUSS a good area for activity.

3) Portugal.

PG paper - described self-activity of workers and peasants, emphasizes geographical - north & south - variations. Army split left-right down the middle. Role of CP & leftist groups. Anarchists weak. Overreliance of population on the army. "Poder popular" a strong movement "Combete" probably the sole libertarian communist group.

From the typist:

My apologies for the sessions being out of order. This is how the ms came to me, and in my haste I didn't check the order of events! (MM)

Stirling Group Report

At the time of writing, the response from some comrades was disappointing. Not being too certain of the intended functions of the SLF Newsletter, we will keep the report to a minimum. The "group" is still in its infancy, although it is recognized that this phase should not be too protracted. As was stated in the last SLF newsletter, as well as a librarian and a teacher, the group comprises several students. Just what this last fact entails, however, is not clear, since "students" come in various shapes and sizes, bring varying experiences to their situation and are differentially affected by it).

So far, we have not met often enough to overcome the feeling of artificiality inherent in the process of "forming" a group - almost a contradiction in terms. Nonetheless, the enthusiasm of individuals is high as are the present writer's hopes for an active and effective unit. The strategy is expected to become more overtly anarchist than the last SLF newsletter indicated and among other things we hope to demonstrate and clarify the relationship of our concern with ecological issues to anarchism generally.

Some members have managed to attend relevant meetings of the Glasgow group (Lygate, Iona Centre and Murrays' demo), but it is felt important to avoid subsuming our nascent identity in Glasgow although the value of contact is recognized as essential. We hope for a fertile exchange of ideas with all groups in Scotland.

N.S. has departed temporarily for foreign parts and this hard worker will be missed (and hence the new contact address for Stirling). Incidentally, Pat Jackson at this address is willing to translate articles (only) from French into English (and, at a pinch), the other way round), although there is only a limited amount of time available.

P.S. If anyone knows of a cheap duplicator available, please let us know.

Personal Note

D. Jackson is attempting to produce an article/paper on anarchists and organization about anarchist theories of organization and how we in our praxis apply (or fail to apply) them with particular reference to Great Britain. When finished, this will be available to interested parties (within the movement). Meanwhile, anyone interested in corresponding on this or who knows of any relevant material, please write to Derek at the contact address(Stirling).

PPS Several copies of Anarchist Alternatives are still available from either the Stirling or Glasgow groups.

Glasgow Group Report

As reported at the last SLF conference, the Glasgow comrades decided that it would be more productive if the Fair Fares campaign were built up on a district basis, rather than attempting to cover the whole of Glasgow. To date, this has meant the posterizing of one small district with slogans. With the pressure of other activities (to be more exact, the pressure of Murray Defence on some comrades and lack of enthusiasm for F.F. from other comrades), debate on the future of the campaign has

been shelved.

International Secretary

The recently elected International Secretary moved out of Glasgow six weeks ago and hasn't been heard from since. Any takers?

Newspapers

Issue 2 of Clydesider planned for the end of July. Its editorial policy (if any) isn't clear. Contact through Glasgow group. Re Anarchist Alternatives: nothing yet happening as regards issue No. 2.

Murray Defence

All comrades should have received a copy of the Murray Defence Committee Information Sheet. More copies are available from Glasgow - a contribution towards postage would be appreciated. The Committee is receiving very little support from the Left here; nationally and internationally, the Murrays' plight has received very little publicity, so they are not a suitable "bandwagon" for (e.g., International Socialists) the left to jump on to. In the words of one IS member, there is no potential for mass recruitment. Glasgow District Trades Council doesn't meet until early August, so their potential help is probably lost completely. Our action so far has been restricted to twice-weekly pickets of the Allied Irish Bank in Glasgow and an occupation and picket of Aer Lingus in Glasgow on July 28th; appeals for support have been duplicated, as have petitions - copies of all are available from the Glasgow group. If anyone has the address of left radical lawyers, please pass them on to us as we are attempting to organise a lawyers' meeting. Noel and Marie are up in court for their "appeal" on July 29th - this is the crucial date for any protest action.

Activity has fallen drastically in recent weeks, even allowing for people going on holiday. Apathy and lack of direction has hit us ~~every~~ hard. Discussions over political direction could have been more meaningful if they hadn't come at such a bad time, so many of the group either away or planning holidays.

Scottish News Digest

All comrades in Scotland should have received a copy of the first issue of the Scottish News Digest. The idea of a monthly report/information sheet was first brought up in Glasgow about 3/4 months ago by myself - there was no support voiced by the comrades for the idea; in fact, the only person that I remember voicing any opinion thought that IAT was the best medium for this type of information. But to accept this is to negate the benefits of Scottish comrades working together to produce a monthly newssheet - it could be a good way of improving contact between anarchists in Scotland because an exchange of views/reaching agreement on our views on various topics would produce more meaningful newssheet for distribution abroad. And a sense of international solidarity can be very good for strengthening revolutionary outlook and commitment.

I don't accept that the anarchist movement in Scotland has in any meaningful way "hit a slump". If it had, this would imply that once upon a time there was a movement. If we are seriously trying to create a meaningful libertarian presence, and if we accept that an important way of doing this is through collective action, then we must give some conscious thought as to how we are going to go about it. If you accept the idea of the SND, you've got to realise that it is not one or two individuals' little pet project that will keep going without active support - it's not something for consumption by you, it's something that is yours to make for consumption by comrades abroad.

The address for SND is c/o 163, Gt. George St., Glasgow G12

Gerry Smith (Glasgow)

Post-Conference Critic

In case no one else has done so I have decided to "comment" on comrade N.R.'s "comments" on the last conference. I'm glad that the comrade isn't satisfied with the present state of the libertarian movement, but his criticisms struck me as being without foundation in fact, based as they were on his conception of the atmosphere at the conference. Certainly there was a lack of worthwhile discussion - but I think that this is a reflection on, not the SLP, but individual comrades. So comrade NR, please continue with constructive criticism, but try to help others to have a meaningful exchange by saying who you are disagreeing with, precisely what your criticisms are, and what your suggestions to improve on the situation are.

And I agree that we should not succumb to "needling"; personal conflicts that end up in that way are not at all constructive. I'm very conscious of this.

Gerry Smith (GAG)

Comments on the Confederation of British Anarchists

The "provisional, minimal" statement of the Confederation of British Anarchists is intended to a) show interested non-anarchists that the CBA is based on a political ideology that is vastly different from the traditional Leninist/Trot style and b) provide a basis for discussion within the CBA, aiming at evolving a more detailed statement of agreement on which to work.

A copy of the statement of aims is available from the CBA National Secretary, Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1. The first section - Aims - is very general, but even on this level it is in parts open to different interpretations - something to please everyone. The second section - Organisation - deals with group organisation (completely autonomous); a few words on the next step being regional federations, then national confederations. In all, it's only 400 words long.

Like the SLP, the CBA seems to regard as its main function (at the moment) the improving of communications between all anarchists in its "territory".

From the limited correspondence that we have had with them it is difficult to properly assess the CBA - remember, they haven't been around for long, and where they are trying to go isn't clear yet. It looks as if they are having a great deal of trouble trying to reach agreement even on a very general statement of aims - personalities seem to provide the major clashing point. (Political disagreements don't provide a clashing point because they largely avoid discussing organisational aspects that the comrades know will provoke clashes). Local groups are not strong enough, not clear enough in their own aims, to make possible a federation, based on mutual agreement, that can unite all the groups. When "unity" is presented (mainly) in terms of better communication via a newsletter, there is a great danger of squabbling and petty disagreement bogging the whole thing down. (Perhaps a greater stress on in-depth analysis of various aspects of the political struggle as a basis for united action would be more rewarding.)

No matter what its defects may be, the CBA is an attempt to organise on a national scale, and as such it deserves to be taken seriously, to see what we in the SLF can learn from it and give to it. One fault is not that it does not want to be selective in membership, but that it has not worked out whether or not it is necessary to be selective. If our comrades are making a serious attempt to organise then they will have to face up to the question of membership - building a news service is not building a revolutionary organisation. Unlike ourselves in the SLF the comrades in the CBA are making an attempt to build an organisation - I don't say a revolutionary organisation (although this is clearly what the Corby comrades had in mind when they initially tested out opinion on the CBA) because they do not at present have enough common agreement to make this immediately obvious; what we can learn from them is that a rejection of AWA-type national organisation does not necessarily leave comrades with only the idea of a loose-knit federation to turn to, where the aim is unity at all costs. What about a strong federation of all those who agree on a meaningful statement of policy? If the CBA is to become something worthwhile this is where it will go - dropping (and excluding?) those who do not agree with its organisational beliefs.

As to the relationship between the SLF and the CBA: until we ourselves work out the basis of our organisation and start to give it direction, we would only confuse the whole thing by jumping into the CBA. But let's not sit on the fence any longer than we have to - I suggest a circulation of discussion papers over the next two weeks, to attempt to clarify what comrades want to see growing from the present SLF, with concrete suggestions as to future steps to be taken. It's too easy to be complacent while our comrades in France, Italy, Germany . . . are fighting for the world revolution. What are you doing?

Gerry Smith (GAG)

SLF Contact Addresses

Stirling: D & P Jackson, 99 Rosebank, Sauchie, FK10 3NR
Glasgow: C. Baird, 122 Benneray St., Milton, Glasgow G22 7AU
Edinburgh: Bob Gibson, 7 Union St., Edinburgh EH1 6LF
Dundee: M. Malet, 1 Lynnewood Place, Dundee
Aberdeen: S. Blake, c/o APP, 167 King St., Aberdeen AB2 3AE

FROM AN ANONYMOUS POSTER ON THE WALLS OF MILAN (Trans. by NS)

Here are Pinelli's murderers: the late Luigi Calabresi, Inspector of the P.S. (Pubblica Sicurezza, i.e., Police); Sabino Lo Grano, Lieutenant of the Carabinieri; Vito Panessa, Sergeant in the P.S.; Carlo Mainardi, P.S. Sergeant; Giuseppe Caracutta, P.S. Sergeant; Pietro Mucinielli, P.S. Sergeant, with the following: Antonio Allegra, head of the Police Department; Dr. Marcello Guida, provincial chief of police; Dr. Libero Mazza, Prefect; Dr. Ennio de Peppo, attorney chief; the Hon. Franco Restivo, Ministry for Home Affairs. After six years of "meticulous" investigation into the "tragic end of this respectable railway man", some people fool themselves into believing that the only authority capable of ending the charade is the state, served by the "democratic and anti-fascist" judge Gerardo d'Arrosio.

Revolutionaries have never had secret expectations of any state organization, because we struggle to destroy these foundations. The state is unable to criticise itself beyond a certain inviolable limit. The Italy of the "historic compromise" is saddled with a compromise which, having rejected the only sensible supposition, that of murder (due to "complete lack of evidence") and - although not completely - that of

suicide ("possible but not likely"), the exemplary magistrate is able to choose the hypothesis of illness ("probable"). And no doubt, "a serious illness" gripped Pinelli, when he was struck on the back of the neck, when he was pushed out of the fourth floor window of the police station and when he crashed to the ground. How is it that promptly after the slaughter at the ~~Piazza~~ Piazza Fontana (a reference to the bombing of the Banco d'Agricola in which 13 people died and as a result of which Pietro Valpreda spent so many years in jail without trial) organised by the S.I.D. (the secret police) and after the murder of Pinelli (who was being interrogated in connection with this bombing), a number of revolutionaries were willing to affirm the truth, independently of the 'grapascales', independently of the parties and the unions . . . so today, and tomorrow . . . we must publicise this fact: PINELLI WAS MURDERED BY THE STATE.

(trans. from Anarchismo no. 8,
March-April 1976)

EDINBURGH GROUP REPORT

SH
SH now out of hospital. Group working on leaflets for recruiting drive in the autumn. One aimed especially at students for the start of term and another more general one. Have been cooperating with Glasgow in the campaign to prevent the Dublin hangings. We held a public meeting and invited left, liberal, and trade union branchesto attend. Attendance was poor. We are finding that people are really reluctant to give support or become involved in any real sense. So much for the unity of the Left. Duplicater is still working if any comrade wishes to use it. Please give us advance notice if you are coming down. GR wishes to apologise for lousy typing. Our usual typist RG having gone to Lewis for the summer.

GR.


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to cover postage etc, send to SLF Sec..

S.A.G. has little to report at present-though this is not a bad sign. Though anxious to maintain an identity separate from the University, we organised, together with comrades from Edinburgh and Glasgow, a bookstall on the first day of term. Initial response was quite heartening-some 26 people signifying their interest in the group. There is to be a follow-up meeting in the Student's Union. Main point of this is to try to co-ordinate local libertarians.

One lucrative spin-off from this is the availability of size-able Student Assoc. grants to pay for speakers, resources, etc.. In addition to this there is the possibility of a room with the Eco-Action group which could be provitively used as an information centre/skill exchange/library.

Meanwhile our contribution to the Murray Defence group is gaining momentum: we put out a statement on the case on the first day of term, as well as distributing info. leaflets compiled by Glasgow and Dublin and we be spreading information throughout Stirling-shire and Clackmannanshire via short leaflets and posters. This distribution of relevant information will be extended in the form of community leaflets dealing with local issues of conflict, such as housing and the environment. First of all though we will have to resolve the problem of group organisation-and as early as possible. The conflicts posed when things actually have to get done are aggravated by the structureless form of the group so some form of simple organisation will be proposed at the next meeting. The organisation versus spontaneity debate continues to be of crucial importance.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED -

SOCIAL REVOLUTION NO. 4-paper of the Social Revolution Group. Contents include-"Housing Cuts-What are we defending?"- "Danger-Work can damage your health"- "Spain - from the Civil War to Juan Carlos"- "Grapes of Wrath- Food and profit" 15p including postage. For orders of 6 or more 7p/copy post free, for 12 or more 6p/copy post free. Libertarian communism No. 10, discussion journal of the Social Revolution group, contacts include "Ireland, Bwinic, and TOM" "The loft and the General Strikes" "An editorial from "Combates" 22p inc post. For orders of 6 or more 13p/copy post free, for 12 or more 11p/copy post free. Both Social Revolution-Libertarian Communism available from Social Revolution, Box 23, APP, 167 King St, Aberdeen. Available from Aberdeen Peoples Press, 167 King St, Aberdeen. GIL OVER TROUBLED WATERS, the first "anti- report" on N Sea Oil, now in its 2nd edition, 90p inc p-p. Aberdeens fishing industry in crisis, special 12 page report 12p inc P-P. APP Cuts Special- Analysis of government cutbacks and how to fight them (6 pages)- send SAE.

BRATACH DUBH ANARCHIST PAMPHLETS

- 1) Anarchism and the National Liberation Struggle. 15p plus postage.
- 2) Critique of Syndicalist Methods. (in preparation)
- 3) Workers' Autonomy. ((in preparation))

BRATACH DUBH PUBLICATIONS,

6/0 Andy and Veronica Mc Gowan,
83 Langside Terrace,
PORT GLASGOW,
Scotland.

Their effectiveness as an activity for libertarian socialists.

I think community newspapers are about the only type of paper which can put across revolutionary views and that is capable of reaching a reasonable-sized circulation in the present climate of political consciousness (plus possibly papers orientated round a particular job). Even "Socialist Worker", with a circulation many times that which a national libertarian paper could hope to reach in the immediate future sells to one person in every 1,500(+) of the people in the geographical area it is aiming at - Great Britain. However, ABERDEEN PEOPLES PRESS, for example, sells to one person in every 120 in Aberdeen and there's no reason why every city* in Britain shouldn't have a community paper selling to that sort of proportion of the population: in fact many already do. By no means are all community papers libertarian or even revolutionary in a broad sense. But this does not affect the above argument, since those which are broadly libertarian socialist (eg APP, Islington Gutter Press) sell just as well as the others.

I think it's important that wherever the situation is suitable, we become involved in local community papers. In addition to getting libertarian views across to relatively large numbers you're doing so in a way which makes libertarian politics seem much more credible than they usually do, since the analysis is linked with a lot of factual information that people can easily relate to and are glad to receive. This is not to say that national, explicitly libertarian socialist papers don't have an important role. They do, but we should realise what it is. There's no chance of them becoming mass circulation papers in the near future, being bought by the average "person in the street". Inevitably the vast majority of readers are going to be people interested in "socialism". Thus there's no point in writing very simple stuff or material which is little more than "anti-capitalist". The aim should be to go into (in more depth) those areas in which our views are different from the average 'left-winger' eg libertarian socialism, abolition of the market economy. This is of course not to say that we should use a lot of jargon - its depth of coverage I'm meaning. I think to date the articles in Social Revolution have tended to be too short and simplistic for the people who have been buying the paper - the now larger S.R. should improve on this. To take another example, Anarchist Worker is, I think, pitching its content at a far too simple level for the type of people who are likely to buy the paper. Community papers have a limitation in that it is difficult (though not impossible, I think) to get over much more than a "this-is-a-rotten-system let's-all-get-together-to-fight-back" message without becoming too "politically heavy" and risking losing readers. Explicitly libertarian socialist papers like S.R. should try to fill this gap.

Mike Vallance, Aberdeen.

* factual note - West Highland Free Press & its recent offshoot in Fort William are (mild) rural community papers.

Reply on COMMUNITY-ANARCHIST separation.

M.V. in the above article seems to support the established dual structure for libertarian publications. First of all the punter gets the vague "anti-capitalist" message & a few filter through to the 'higher ground' of S.R., AW etc (beyond that there is always Bratach Dubh etc). In Glasgow we started off in this pattern, with Clydesider (see Glasgow report) as an implicit paper & A.A.A.A. as an explicit journal. However, I contend that a community struggle paper covering a fair size area & limited by its Monthly schedule, should be anarchist as well & be able to reflect on ongoing struggles & news exposures so that people can go forward to link "anti-capitalist" struggles. Rather than mirror the duality of capitalism between appearance & substance we should seek to actively transcend it, bringing anarchy into play at its real level. Obviously Mike is writing from experience, but I still put forward the alternative unitary approach which we in Glasgow must get round to bringing to fruition so that it parallels struggles whether we are in the thick of them or not. A 1:120 ratio of readers to population /pto/.

ABERDEEN REPORT

Ed:

There are three people involved in Aberdeen Group Social Revolution- Mike, who works full time at Aberdeen Peoples Press, Guy, who is an undergraduate Science student at Aberdeen University, and Sandy, who is a postgraduate science student at the University. Following are the activities we've been involved in over the last few months. Social Revolution No 4.-THE editing and layout of " Social Revolution" is rotated round the different groups in SR, and Aberdeen Group produced the latest issue. Though the work took longer than we hoped we were pleased with how it came out. ABERDEEN PEOPLES PRESS-7 people work full time at APP, which follows a broadly libertarian socialist policy. APP has recently acquired new premises near the city centre. These are owned jointly with 2 other groups- in the same building there will be "Boontown Books" radical bookshop, "Ambrosia" a wholefood shop, and APPs printing equipment and offices. In addition there is a flat where some of APPs full time workers live. (address is 163-167 King St, Aberdeen. Tel Aberdeen 29669) The flat is already occupied, APPs office is already functioning there, the bookshop and foodshop are expected to open in October, the printing equipment to be installed soon afterwards. Another new venture by APP is joint research with the Workers Educational Assoc. into Shop Stewards organisation locally and Pre-School child care provision. APPs monthly community newspaper is having a break from publication while alterations to the premises continue, and while the opportunity is taken to re-assess the papers form and content. APPs 'Oil Over Troubled Waters' has sold out its first printing of 2,000 and has been re-printed.

APPs Community printing service has been busy recently with work from all over Scotland. OTHER ARMY INFORMATION CENTRE- all 3 of us have been involved in leafleting of Gordon Highlanders recruiting events by O.A.I.C. those have generally been successful, initiating a high level of discussion/ argument with both civilians and soldiers. Attempts by the police to stop 2 recent leafletings by threatening arrest for "obstruction" and "breach of the peace" were thwarted when we called their bluff and carried on and they didn't do anything, obviously feeling unable to arrest us under such ridiculous charges.

ABERDEEN CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE CUTS

Mike is involved in ACAC, a joint trades unionists- community group, body which is opposing government cutbacks in public expenditure. ACAC, has the support of the Trades Council and is currently trying to involve as many individual union branches and community groups as possible. A CUTS BULLETIN IS CURRENTLY BEING PREPARED.

UNIVERSITY ANARCHIST ASSOC

Three people not previously known to us have formed an Anarchist - Assoc at the University and Sandy and Guy hope to be involved in activity with them.

Groups Address is SR, Box 23, C/O APP, 167 King St Aberdeen
Tel- 29669 and ask for Mike.

Reply to COMMUNITY/ANARCHIST

while better than any thing likely to be achieved in Glasgow for a while, means basically that it is selling primarily to "alternative" people, similar to the defunct "Glasgow News" who congregate in certain areas within cities. No real inroad is made therefore into the everyday reality of working class people. To its credit the two instigators of Clydeside have ideas on how to reverse this trend, but have not been able to make it persistent which is obviously crucial. /KM, Glasgow/

Pages 5-8 of this Newsletter anticipate the forthcoming SLF conference & try to seek potential improvements in SLF & out of group axis. NEW from Solidarity, 15 Charles St, Oxford is "Urban devastation" 25p.

On the Scottish Libertarian Federation

The Scottish Libertarian Federation has somehow managed to last 18 months. Conceived in the vaguest of terms it has not functioned particularly well even on those terms, the irregularity of the newsletter is probably the best evidence of that.

As a loose grouping of loose groupings the SLF is no more than the sum of its parts and the faults and shortcomings of the federation are those of its affiliates. I feel that now is the time for looking inwards, to decide what it is we want from the SLF before we can be in a position to look outwards. If we don't deal with the question of organisation now we are bound to waste more time on futile discussion. Concretely, I think the next conference should attempt to deal with three, fairly broad tasks;

1) To draw up a statement of 'aims and principles', acceptance of which would be the basis of affiliation to the SLF. This need not necessarily be done from scratch. A discussion could be based on the AWA 'Aims and Principles' or on Solidarity's 'As we see it'. The purpose of this, at least one purpose, would be to avoid futile discussion on basic principles and on topics which are only marginally libertarian.

2) To work out a common and coherent policy on topics of immediate relevance and importance, not for the sake of 'having a line' but as part of the process of developing a coherent and coordinated strategy.

3) To work out possible areas of coordinated action and propaganda of a national publication of 'Against Authority' and/or of a news bulletin to be sent to comrades abroad.

The SLF must cease to be a talking shop, a twice yearly social where we talk about what happened at Kronstadt or in Spain. It is, or should be the means by which we develop our ideas and praxis, by which we share our ideas, our experiences, our resources, where we work out our orientation to the struggles about us

P.C. (Glasgow)

1. When I speak about the anarchist alternative to friends who have some experience of revolutionary politics, or who attempt to apply a liberating perspective to their own existence, one of the points that they cannot easily imagine is the concept/reality of the anarchist-libertarian socialist movement. Their stereotype of a libertarian is of an individual struggling primarily in isolation who in attempting to release human potential may go as far as to question the concept of society as a totality. Loose bonds of affinity among libertarians is conceived as failing to extend to Group identity & structure. The communality (sense of togetherness) as typified in comrade consciousness which is present in Left circles is not seen as being a libertarian character-istic. This divergence has both positive & negative dimensions. Positively, the form in which we contrast ourselves with these Left groups is grasped (libertarian ~~vs.~~ Authoritarian). Negatively, the contrasting content is extended in a direction which effectively transforms our theory from anarchist-libertarian socialist to Nihilist or at best a contradictory existentialism.

2. Contrary to a viewpoint which sees a dichotomy between 'the individual' & the totality of society, our grasp of man as a social being means that a truly free society cannot stand in coercive contradistinction to a truly free individual. The negation of the self is equated with conditions of domination/subordination which are inseparable from State controlled social Organ-isation. The centre of power theory which all Statists invoke is but a 'scientific' extension of the organic analogy whereby Society is conceived in the form of a human body (presumably Male!). This ideological construct is but an ~~express~~ -ion of a continuing pattern of social relations of production which increasingly stand in contradiction to the (technological) forces of production which are scientifically possible. So when we speak of social revolution, we mean that we equate the negation of the self with a social environment in which the great mass of human beings is separated by hierarchy from power. Society as a totality appears to stand

in hostility to the individual only because any society which is based on domination/mystification makes revolt against the reality of its existence appear as revolt against the fact of society as such. Hence it is no surprise that libertarians are presented in Nihilist terms or as fetishists of 'the individual'. Lacking a decisive break with the standards of State controlled society, even people who sympathise with us (& some of us ourselves!) invert the atomisation fostered by capitalism (anti-social) into a situation whereby revolt is individualised. The ideology of Existentialism is itself an ~~express~~ -ion of the pessimism of this present System. It hence fails to evolve a philosophy of praxis which allows for an ongoing relation of conflict/harmony between collective and individual struggles. The possibility of a free society based on free association of equal human beings & the end of all directing Agencies is thus unable to be conceived realistically. Our "Castles" are only mind-blowing fantasies.

3. THE views of others help us to (objectively) view ourselves & our actions. Our image, however, appears as an obstacle to the development of our praxis. To a large extent, it is only by first-hand experience through praxis (propaganda is a step removed, second-hand) that we can demystify our image and progress from Ideal visions to the materialisation of the libertarian alternative. The philosophy of anarchist praxis means basically a reflective abstraction from the everyday way in which an ongoing relation is created between our capacity to theorise and our capacity to be active. The concern is with a method of

discerning how we go about achieving this "ongoing relation" in a way which will be effective (make an impact on the mass of working people & contribute to the erosion of State power). Our ability to transcend the 'opposites' of mindless activism which lacks strategical direction & staying power and the theorising in a vacuum pursuit of Ivory Tower intellectualism, cannot be separated from the environmental context which helps determine this ability of ours to be effective. With a group context of free association this method is determined collectively in-so-far as activities draw comrades together, and individually through self-activity. Free of a directing elite who assume central control, collective philosophy of praxis for libertarians means a complex interplay of perceptions from all active comrades with (hopefully!) a dynamic synthesis resulting. However, it must be admitted that this is rarely the result, being the result of anti-intellectualism which inhibits clarity of the directing purpose of activity AND the result of being situated in an isolated and ineffective position relative to the working class. There is a dynamic interaction (dialectical) between voluntarism & determinism. No context is sufficient to completely stifle the ability of us to make an effective impact. No context is sufficient in itself to stimulate a revolutionary movement and capacity for struggle which is libertarian in a true sense. At the same time, you cannot realise an ideal without reference to the reality in which you are situated. The given material situation can only be developed in ways which foster anarchy by a rigorous yet imaginative praxis never removed from the everyday reality of the mass of working people. As Bakunin has said, to proceed from the ideal "begets despotism" while a materialistic approach strives by transcending compromise "at the real idealisation - that is, the humanisation, at the full & complete emancipation - of society" (1867). As Marx has written, "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given & transmitted from the past" (1852).

4. To look inward for a moment, within our self-assigned labels we divide into categories according to whether we :-
a) subscribe to the necessity of violence in the struggle against State power;
b) emphasise ecological & alternative technological projects;
c) attach primacy to industrial struggle at the point of production and/or the creation of Industrial Unions, Workers Councils, revolutionary syndicates etc;
d) stress propaganda/agitprop almost to the exclusion of direct action;
e) concentrate on the politics of sexuality & the family, 'liberating' kids, gays, women (even men);
f) stress inter-national solidarity work on behalf of victims of State oppression. In a metropolis like London these boundaries within our praxis come to be expressed structurally, that is

by associations of structured linkage which are based on a) to f) type distinctions. Historically there are many cases of such groups Nationally organised on an inclusion/exclusion basis (AWA, SR, SWP, BLX & Solidarity being current eg's). Although more usually geographically concentrated, paper collectives (eg. Anarchy, Wildcat & Freedom) have existed on a similar basis. The usual common denominators which combine to constitute a movement of sorts tend in libertarian circles to evolve from "what we are not" rather than "what we are". This leads to the contrast with 'revolutionary' Organisations which exhibit Leninist tendencies:- executive committees; tension between Centre & periphery; the Paper as the vehicle of the majority faction; the determination of the Line by experienced militants; extension of action/pto/.

from trade union channels outwards ; hierarchical differentiation of functions & tasks; the group as the Vanguard encapsulating the most 'advanced' sections of The Class; the "Holy Family" of correct & sanctioned Texts and divine commandments of Authorities etc etc.. As a negative basis for our affinity/communality on the question of form of our association this is OK. This needs to be extended with a self-awareness as expressed in praxis. In other words, positive self-consciousness & the elaboration of a philosophy of praxis. Too often libertarians succumb to a fetishism of form which stresses the Ideal over the material. Councils are not libertarian in themselves. The absence of them in France 1968 did not account in itself for the demise of generalised contestation (total struggle against social relations of capitalism) - the same applies to the 'revolutionary' Party! - the content of struggle situated in context has primacy over the form in which the alternative is expressed. Learn from history (including instances where no

libertarian presence is evident - not just from Maknovista or Spain 1936) but don't vulgarise theory by explaining the future as a re-enactment of the past. It is more crucial to be able to see in context social trends of the present era. To reach the point of effective impact our method has to emerge in interaction with these social trends, being the attempt to strengthen libertarian as opposed to Authoritarian tendencies. The recuperation of revolt through reactionary, reformist or 'revolutionary' channels has to be understood both in reflection from praxis and through an active reworking of our praxis. Ways & means of communicating with working people have to be developed and cannot be at a level which is detached from their everyday reality. To an extent we cannot avoid being an avant-garde in the sense of our perception of an alternative & our articulation of this alternative (sociologists categorise class identity - which may be a "false consciousness"...class militancy as an uneven but progressive intensification which may extend to struggle to realise a revolutionary human alternative).

5. In Scotland as in several other cultural regions libertarian federations have recently re-emerged - North-West, London, England as a whole (C.B.A). The S.D.F. is an expression of affinity between autonomous groups in a certain context, namely Scotland. Our lack of effective impact stemming from our present inability to have ⁱⁿ clarify our method; flexibility in our adaption of method to context; elaboration of form of association so that mutual aid & reflection is enhanced; etc means that we are not immune from embarking on Ideal(utopian) projects, being tempted to indulge in activity which comes to be isolated as being "adventurist", or drifting back to the 'practical' world where recuperation & embourgeoisement/demoralisation wins. To get ourselves together we must therefore evolve a philosophy of praxis which through successes & setbacks can progressively ensure a cumulative, effective impact of a persistent quality. Our propaganda, campaigns of action, outlets for dialogue must be related to a coherent method. Propaganda - papers which comment, invite comment on everyday struggles relevant to working people; applying our conception of the libertarian alternative to everchanging reality; discarding jargon but not the coherence of what we communicate; Campaigns & propaganda as mutually supportive, with an emphasis on expanding contacts. FAIR FARES for the Glasgow group has been our most relevant campaign to date, with future activity aware of the need to avoid a general diffusion by spreading the location too far from the bases we can say we have. "Takeover the City" was more than the import of an Italian slogan, instead being an attempt to frame the FARES campaign & projects of a similar nature in a wider concern with philosophy of praxis. To elaborate such a 'philosophy' is not to contemplate reality in a detached/scholastic manner but to attempt to reflect on activity - not an SLF of INSIPID debating circles !

/KM, Glasgow, Sept '76/.